

Inventor: Tye, David
Serial No.: 10/678,901
Army Dkt. No.: 021878 0005US1

Art Unit: 3654
Examiner: Esther O. Okezie

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

What is claimed is:

1. (currently amended) A bottle gripping device for gripping a crown neck of a bottle during cleaning, capping, and filling, comprising:
a first stationary gripping member;
a support body coupled to the first stationary gripping member;
a first biased gripping member that is biased toward the first stationary gripping member by at least one spring and is adapted to move away from the first stationary gripping member as a result of pressure from the bottle;
an opening formed between the first biased gripping member and the first stationary gripping member capable of receiving a crown neck of the bottle to apply the pressure;
a second stationary gripping member coupled to the support body;
a second biased gripping member coupled to the support body wherein the second biased gripping member is biased toward the second stationary gripping member;
a movable mechanical finger coupled to the support body and capable of moving the first biased gripping member away from the first stationary gripping member; and
wherein the device is adapted to contact the bottle at [[4]] a plurality of distinct points comprising a total of less than 25 % of a total circumference of the crown neck.
2. (previously presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the bottle has a 360° circumference and the distinct points comprise less than 90° of arc.
3. (cancelled)

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4. (cancelled)
5. (cancelled)
6. (cancelled)
7. (previously presented) The device of claim 1, further comprising a guide upon which the first biased gripping member slides between a gripped configuration and a released configuration.
8. (previously presented) The device of claim 7, wherein the first stationary gripping member has a groove that cooperates with the crown neck to hold the bottle.
9. (currently amended) A method of cleaning, filling, or capping a bottle, comprising:
providing a bottle having a neck with a circular cross section;
providing a support frame coupled to a biased gripping member and a stationary gripping member;
wherein the biased gripping member is biased toward the stationary gripping member and forms an opening between the stationary gripping member and the biased gripping member;
pushing the bottle through the opening such that the neck of the bottle pushes the biased gripping member away from the stationary gripping member;
and
gripping the bottle at ~~four~~ a plurality of discrete points along the circumference of the neck;
performing at least one of cleaning, filling, and capping of the bottle; and
releasing the bottle from the gripping members by providing a movable mechanical finger coupled to the support frame to move the gripping member away from the stationary gripping member.

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10. (previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of gripping the bottle further comprises using the bottle to apply pressure to the biased gripping member.
11. (Cancelled)